

IN THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figs. 1-6. These sheet, which includes Figs. 1-6, replace the original sheets including Figs. 1-6.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4-8, 11-12 and 14 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 4-8, 11-12 and 14 are amended; and Claims 2-3, 9-10 and 13 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer by the present amendment. Support for the amended claims can be found in the original specification, claims and drawings.¹ No new matter is presented.

In the Office Action, the drawings and Claim 1 were objected to because of minor informalities; Claims 1, 8 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Yanagawa (U.S. 6,246,660, herein Yanagawa); Claims 1, 2, 8-10, 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Kashiwabara (JP 2000-306253); Claims 7, 11 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kashiwabara in view of Masu (JP 2001-266371); and Claims 3-6 were objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant appreciatively acknowledges the indication of allowable subject matter. In response, independent Claims 1, 8 and 12 are amended to incorporate features of Claim 3, which is canceled. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that each of independent Claims 1, 8 and 12 recite features that patentably define over the applied references.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 1, 8 and 12 (and the claims that depend therefrom) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

¹ Independent Claims 1, 8 and 12 are amended to incorporate the subject matter of canceled Claim 3, and all the claims are amended to correct minor informalities and to avoid interpretation under 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph.

The Office Action also objected to Figs. 1-6 for not including a proper legend. In response, Figs. 1-6 are each labeled as "Background Art," as characterized in the originally filed specification. Further, Claim 1 is amended to correct the antecedent basis issued noted in the Office Action.

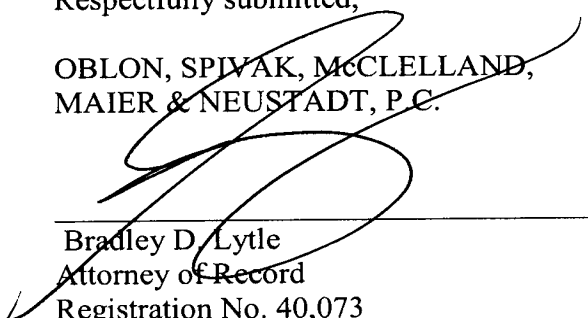
Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objections to the drawings and Claim 1 be withdrawn.

Consequently, for the reasons discussed in detail above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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